



Trends in mental illness and suicidality after Hurricane Katrina

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Abstract:

A representative sample of 815 pre-hurricane residents of the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina was interviewed 5-8 months after the hurricane and again 1 year later as the Hurricane Katrina Community Advisory Group (CAG). The follow-up survey was carried out to study patterns-correlates of recovery from hurricane-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), broader anxiety-mood disorders and suicidality. The Trauma Screening Questionnaire screening scale of PTSD and the K6 screening scale of anxiety-mood disorders were used to generate DSM-IV prevalence estimates. Contrary to results in other disaster studies, where post-disaster mental disorder typically decreases with time, prevalence increased significantly in the CAG for PTSD (20.9 vs 14.9% at baseline), serious mental illness (SMI; 14.0 vs 10.9%), suicidal ideation (6.4 vs 2.8%) and suicide plans (2.5 vs 1.0%). The increases in PTSD-SMI were confined to respondents not from the New Orleans Metropolitan Area, while the increases in suicidal ideation-plans occurred both in the New Orleans sub-sample and in the remainder of the sample. Unresolved hurricane-related stresses accounted for large proportions of the inter-temporal increases in SMI (89.2%), PTSD (31.9%) and suicidality (61.6%). Differential hurricane-related stress did not explain the significantly higher increases among respondents from areas other than New Orleans, though, as this stress was both higher initially and decreased less among respondents from the New Orleans Metropolitan Area than from other areas affected by the hurricane. Outcomes were only weakly related to socio-demographic variables, meaning that high prevalence of hurricane-related mental illness remains widely distributed in the population nearly 2 years after the hurricane.

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2556982>

Resource Description

Communication: ☒

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change;
 surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience: ☒

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker, Public

Exposure : ☒

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event, Human Conflict/Displacement

Extreme Weather Event: Hurricanes/Cyclones

Geographic Feature: 

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal, Urban

Geographic Location: 

resource focuses on specific location

United States

Health Impact: 

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Injury, Mental Health/Stress, Other Health Impact

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Stress Disorder, Other Mental Disorder

Other Health Impact: Suicide

Mitigation/Adaptation: 

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern: 

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Elderly, Low Socioeconomic Status

Other Vulnerable Population: People with mental illness

Resource Type: 

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale: 

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment: 

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content